

## **ADDITIONAL ADVICE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR PEOPLE WITH HORSES**



**From the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management**

**Well before an emergency is anticipated (e.g., at least 2-3 days before a hurricane arrives),**

- ☐ Assess your risks. Anticipate how each type of emergency would affect you and your horses. Disasters that could strike Rhode Island include hurricanes, floods, blizzards, fire, epidemics, releases of radioactivity (e.g., from a power plant failure), and spills of hazardous material. In each case, what are your greatest vulnerabilities?
- ☐ Develop a plan of action for each type of emergency. Identify what you can do to minimize the consequences. In particular, prepare to have the resources – people, materials, arrangements in advance – that you would need to minimize damage and to recover as well as possible.
- ☐ Establish priorities. For example, if fewer than all animals can be evacuated at the same time, which ones should get first attention?
- ☐ Survey your property to find the best location to confine your animals in each circumstance. For example, check for alternate water sources in case power is lost and pumps and automatic waterers won't work. Minimize exposure to overhead power lines or heavy branches and barbed-wire (vs. woven-wire) fencing.
- ☐ Check with your veterinarian to confirm what tests or immunizations are advisable and to be sure that your horses' medical history is on-record and up-to-date. At a minimum, each horse should have documented Coggins test results.
- ☐ Keep a clear, written record of special feed requirements and medicines with dosing instructions along with the name and phone number of the veterinarian who prescribed it.
- ☐ Insofar as possible help your horse prepare for evacuations. For example, acclimatize your horse to trailers and vans and to the unusual clothing that you may need for your own protection in a disaster.
- ☐ Be sure that you have adequate insurance coverage on your property and animals, including coverage for the type of disasters you may encounter.
- ☐ Permanently identify each horse by tattoo, microchip, brand, tag, photograph (4 views – front, rear, left and right side) and/or drawing. Record its age, sex, breed, and color, and keep this information with your proof of ownership and other important papers.
- ☐ Develop a Buddy System – arrangements with a neighbor or friend to check on each other in the event of a disaster. Agree, for example, tell one another if you

are evacuating, where you are going, and what resources you might pool (such as generators, water tanks, feed, and trailers).

- Be sure that your family and farm personnel know your plan. For example, be sure that in your absence they would know how to contact your Buddy, where to plan to evacuate, how to over-ride automatic doors, how to shut off power and gas, and how to locate emergency supplies.
- PRACTICE IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN.

#### **When an emergency is anticipated,**

- Remember that during emergencies you are taking minimum actions to assure the animal's survival. Secure loose objects, clear walkways, and have enough fresh water and hay on hand for at least three days. (Each horse generally needs 12-20 gallons of water per day.)
- Determine if horses should be left in the pasture or in the barn. For example, in high winds, barns may provide protection from flying debris, but they also can be traps if they collapse. If a pasture has good fencing (well-maintained woven wire rather than barbed wire or electrical fencing) and limited trees, it is probably safer.
- If you think you might need to evacuate your horses from your property, determine several locations the animals could be taken, several routes to these locations, and the entry requirements for each. Your veterinarian, animal control officer, or local emergency manager may have suggestions. Locations that could be used for evacuation include private stables, race tracks, fair grounds, equestrian centers, private farms and humane societies, but do not simply assume that they have room. Make arrangements in advance with the owner/operators to accept your horses and, if possible, check again just before taking the horses there.
- Have trailers and vans maintained, full of gas and ready to move at all times. Plan to leave 48 hours before high winds are expected to build.
- Verify that each animal is well identified. If their ID is not permanently applied, use alternatives: paint or etch hooves, use neck bands or paint or clip your phone number on the side of each animal. Place a leather halter on each horse and attach a luggage tag with your name and phone number, and the horse's name. Write any special needs on an index card inside a zip-lock bag, wrapped around the side of the halter with tape.
- Prepare an emergency kit and keep it in a safe place, where you can get to it before or after a storm and take it with you. It should contain:
  - Documentation (proof of ownership, medical records)
  - Plastic trash barrel with lid
  - Water bucket
  - Blankets
  - Leg wraps
  - Tarpaulins
  - Fire resistant non-nylon leads and halters
  - Livestock markers or paint

- Portable radio and flashlights with extra batteries
- Sharp knife, scissors, hoof pick, and wire cutters
- Duct tape
- Soap and towels
- Fly spray, and bleach/disinfectant
- Prescription medicines for 2 weeks
- First Aid supplies:
  - Antiseptic solutions (e.g., Iodine, Betadine or Nolvasan)
  - Electrolytes
  - Antibiotic ointment
  - Gauze squares and bandages
  - Antibiotic Eye ointment
  - Anti-inflammatory medications (e.g., “bute” / phenylbutasone, Flunixin Meglumine, Benamine)